

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, the President and his followers are telling the American public that the fight about the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, known as FISA, is endangering America; but the reality is that FISA is still fully in effect and administration officials have acknowledged that.

What this fight is really about is the President wants to give telecom companies retroactive immunity for turning over private information about Americans to the executive branch without a court order. Now, some companies refuse to go along, so obviously there could be a problem here. We should not and cannot give immunity until we know what we are giving immunity for. This is like a defendant coming into court saying to a judge, I may or may not have done something wrong. I don't want to tell you about it, but I want you to say that I am not liable, and then the judge agrees.

We would not accept that for an individual, and we must not accept it for corporations or for the government either. As John Adams said, we are a government of laws, not men, and we must honor the Constitution.

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ENERGY TAX HIKE MEANS HIGHER GAS PRICES

(Mr. SMITH of Nebraska asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, this week the House will, for the third time, debate an energy bill which actually raises gas prices for the American people, sends manufacturing jobs overseas, and increases our reliance on foreign energy. This energy tax hike will raise taxes on domestic energy producers, in essence making it more difficult and expensive to produce American energy for American consumers.

As you know, oil has reached and broken the previously untouched benchmark of \$100 a barrel, and the average national price of gasoline has gone up 16 cents in just 13 days. In my State of Nebraska, gas prices are hitting \$3.14 in Grand Island, and in Scottsbluff they're hitting \$3.08.

The American public is deeply worried about the rising cost of energy, yet we stand on the verge of making it worse by stubbornly going forward with this legislation. It's simple, really; raising taxes on American energy leads to higher gas prices and a greater dependency on foreign sources of energy.

POLITICS OF FEAR IS BACK

(Mr. WALZ of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, after a brief reprieve, the politics of

fear is back in full force. The White House and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are saying that the expiration of the Protect America Act has made this Nation more vulnerable. That is simply false. The Washington Post did a nice job of refuting this claim in saying Mr. Bush's pass-it-now-or-the-terrorists-will-win rhetoric is overheated fearmongering.

Before the Presidents Day recess, I encouraged my colleagues to stay in Washington and forge a bipartisan long-term solution. I regret that we didn't do that, but I'm not afraid of the expiration of the Protect America Act. I voted for that piece of legislation.

As a 24-year veteran of the Army National Guard, I know the importance of having the tools to fight the terrorists. However, I'm committed to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to find a long-term bipartisan solution that strengthens national security, protects our civil liberties, and does so without providing blanket immunity to companies that may have broken our laws.

I hope that we can end the fearmongering and the political rhetoric that have characterized this debate and get down to America's business. And I think it needs to be pointed very clearly to this Nation's enemies, this Nation is protected, this Nation stands united on the issue of protecting us, and no amount of rhetoric will change that.

ENERGY

(Ms. FALLIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FALLIN. Mr. Speaker, the energy problems facing our Nation are obvious: Our economy suffers from out-of-control gasoline prices while national security remains at risk from an overreliance on foreign oil. Immediately increasing the amount of energy produced on U.S. soil is the first step to addressing both of these issues.

Rather than pursue a commonsense solution, the House Democrats are once again proposing billions of dollars in punitive tax increases on American oil companies. Heavily taxing oil and gas will discourage exploration and production, and that is exactly what we don't need to do. It will drive up the cost at pumps for consumers and further reduce the incentives for domestic production of oil and gas.

This week marks the third time this year that House Democrats have tried to enact an energy policy that would hurt American families and businesses, increase our reliance on foreign energy sources, and put the long-term energy needs of the United States at risk.

FISA

(Mr. ARCURI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, as a recipient of the nastiest attack ad in the last election cycle, I was sad to see this past weekend that it's already started. Yes, the Swift Boat crews were out and at it again, this time trying to convince the American people that because some Members of Congress felt it was better for our security to extend the FISA bill for 21 days rather than let it expire, that somehow they don't care about America's security. Well, that's not only untrue, it's downright insulting.

And the rationale: We should just trust the President's judgment on this matter and rubber-stamp his decisions. This is the same President who assured us that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Well, I want the cowards who crafted these intentionally deceiving messages to know that I was not sent to Congress to be a rubber stamp for this President or anyone else. I will continue to voice my opposition to the President whenever it is necessary to ensure the rights guaranteed under the Constitution are protected.

QUIT HIDING BEHIND BLAMING GEORGE BUSH

(Mr. SESSIONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, my good friends on the other side of the aisle are hiding behind a cloak that I believe is unfair. They're blaming the President of the United States for protecting this country. They're blaming the President of the United States for something that he is doing to protect this country to make sure that we have the flexibility to make sure that we can listen to enemies who are trying to do us harm. The President, as well as intelligence officials, have fought for the last 3 years to make sure that we can hear those things that were intercepts on the battlefield and turn them around to protect our troops.

Make no mistake about it, my good friends the Democrats today are here on the floor of the House of Representatives saying that they don't want to be a rubber stamp for protecting this country. I want to be a person that says that every single person should understand that today the lawful use of the ability to be effective and efficient in protecting not only our troops but this country has been taken away. Yes, we can still listen, but it's got to go through another process, back through FISA, that takes a month's worth of work through a bunch of judges that help protect this country. We need to get this done. Quit hiding behind some bit of blaming George Bush.

FISA: PRESIDENT AND REPUBLICANS PLAY POLITICS WITH NATIONAL SECURITY

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)